

(b) if so, whether in the report, India is among the few countries suffering most from the desertification even as water erosion is extensive and severe throughout the Himalayas as reported by the United Nations Global Environment Outlook;

(c) if so, whether the Government have considered the report; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per Global Environment Outlook (GEO) report (1997) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the countries suffering most from desertification in Asia and the Pacific are China, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Pakistan and India. India is also among the countries projected to fall into the water-stress category by 2025 A.D.

(c) and (d) The steps taken by the Government to conserve and augment water resources and erosion and other causative factors of desertification include the adoption of National Water Policy (1987), preparation of national perspectives for transfer of water from surplus basins to water deficit areas, promotion of efficient and economic use of water for various purposes, implementation of Centrally Sponsored Command Area Development Programme, Desert Development Programme, Drought Prone Areas Programme and afforestation programmes.

#### Pre Examination Coaching to SC/ST Students

2551. SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM :

SHRI B.L. SHANKAR :

SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT :

SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY :

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of candidates belonging to SC/ST/ OBC provided pre-examination coaching to take IAS/ IPS examinations during the last two years;

(b) the expenditure incurred thereon;

(c) the number of successful candidates out of those who appeared in the examination during the last two years; and

(d) the details of the States/UTs which have submitted proposals to the Central Government to establish the tutorial classes in their respective States for the free coaching classes for SC/ST/OBC persons?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid down on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

#### Production of Coconut/Groundnut Oil

2552. SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH BHATI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the total production of coconut during 1995-96 and 1996-97, State-wise;

(b) the total quantity of oil produced from the groundnut and coconut, separately in each State during each of the last three years and the annual consumption thereof in the country;

(c) the quantity of oils exported during the said period; and

(d) the foreign exchange earned therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) The latest available statistics on State-wise production of coconut for the years 1994-95 and 1995-96 are given below :

State	Production (Million nuts)	
	1994-95	1995-96
1. Andhra Pradesh	1181.4	1231.4
2. Assam	117.6	126.2
3. Goa	118.0	119.0
4. Karnataka	1364.1	1406.5
5. Kerala	5335.1	5905.7
6. Maharashtra	178.6	169.1
7. Orissa	234.5	234.5
8. Tamil Nadu	4345.7	4345.7
9. Tripura	4.7	4.7
10. West Bengal	274.4	279.4
11. A&N Islands	85.4	85.4
12. Lakshadweep	26.0	26.5
13. Pondicherry	34.1	33.8
Total	13299.6	13967.9

(b) No authentic information about the statewise production of edible oils including groundnut and the coconut oil is available. However, the estimated production of groundnut oil and coconut oil is estimated on all India basis during the year 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97 have been as under :

(Lakh M. Tonnes)  
(Supply from domestic sources)

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Groundnut Oil	18.34	17.96	18.40 (tentative)
Coconut Oil	4.00	4.50	4.20 (tentative)

(c) and (d) The quantity and value of coconut and groundnut oils exported for the years 1994-95 and 1995-96 are given below :

Year	Quantity (Tonnes)	Value (Rs. in lakhs)
1994-95	641.42	795.34
1995-96	609.96	424.94

The information for 1996-97 is not available.

[English]

#### Inferior Quality of Seeds

2553. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH :

SHRI RAJKESHAR SINGH :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that inferior quality of seeds are being supplied to the farmers in the country particularly in Karnataka;

(b) if so, the details of cases noticed by the Government during the year 1995-96 and 1996-97 till date, State-wise;

(c) the reasons for the failure of the Government in regard to take action against the suppliers of inferior quality of seeds;

(d) whether the Government propose to strengthen the present Seeds Act with a view to take action against the unscrupulous suppliers of seeds; and

(e) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) Certain instances regarding the supply of sub-standard seeds to farmers in the country, (including in the State of Karnataka) have come to the notice of Government of India.

(b) During 1995-96, 73788 samples were drawn under the provisions of the Seeds Act, of which 6185 were found to be sub-standard. Action was taken against concerned seed dealers which included issue of warnings, orders to stop sale and launching of prosecutions under the provisions of the Seeds Act. Similarly, action was taken against 1109 seeds dealers in 1995-96 under the Seeds (Control) Order 1983 for contravention of the provisions of the Order. The data for 1996-97 is not yet available as the year has not yet come to a close.

(c) to (e) The Seeds Act, 1996 has stringent provisions for quality control of seeds of notified kinds

or varieties. It provides for penalties for supply of sub-standard seeds of notified kinds of varieties. Seeds have been declared as an essential commodity under Essential Commodities Act and the Seeds (Control) Order, 1983 contains provisions for licensing of dealers and for regulating the marketing and distribution of all types of seeds. Contraventions of the Order are punishable under the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act. The Seeds Act, 1966 and the Seeds (Control) Order 1983 provide an adequate legal framework to regulate the quality of seeds distributed to farmers. However, the enforcement of the Seeds Act and Seeds (Control) Order is the responsibility of the State Governments.

[Translation]

#### Scheduled Caste Population in Bihar

2554. SHRI MAHABIR LAL BISHVAKARMA :

SHRI R.L.P. VERMA :

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the total number of people belonging to Scheduled Castes in Bihar;

(b) whether Pan, Swansi and Chanpar Castes are considered as Scheduled Caste and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) if so, the reasons for depriving these caste of the facilities available to other Scheduled Caste people;

(d) whether the Government are expecting any report from the Government of Bihar in this regard;

(e) if so, the time by which the Government of Bihar is likely to submit a report; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) The Scheduled Caste population of Bihar as per 1991 Census is 1,25,71,700.

(b) and (c). Pan, Swansi communities have been specified as Scheduled Castes in relation to the State of Bihar. Chanpar caste has not been specified as Scheduled Caste in Bihar and no request for its inclusion in the Scheduled Caste list of that State has been received.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) and (f) Question does not arise.

#### Issue of Arms Licences

2555. SHRI PARASRAM MEGHWAL : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is necessary for the District Magistrate to verify the character of the applicants by